

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMUNITY RELATIONS BOARD  
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING REPORT**

February 20, 2013, 2:00 p.m.

Stephen P. Clark Government Center, 111 NW 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Miami, FL 33128  
Conference Room 18-4

**Attendance:**

CRB Members: See Roll Call attached

CRB Staff: Amy Carswell, Edward Harris

Guests: Carolyn Nelson-Goedert, Catalyst Miami; Carolina Lopez, Miami-Dade Elections; Carmen Bofill, Miami-Dade Elections; Brian Dennis, Brothers of the Same Mind; Christopher Benjamin, Miami-Dade NAACP; Renita Holmes, WAIVE.

The CRB General Membership Meeting was called to order by the chair, Dr. Walter T. Richardson.

**1. Chairs Report:** Dr. Richardson reported the following:

- I met with new Board of County Commission Chairwoman Rebeca Sosa briefly before the CRB General Membership Meeting in January. We discussed her expeditions of us. She asked staff to proffer a summary of things we have done. I understand that the report has been proffered or is in the works. My desire was to meet with her to find out her opinion of us and the CRB going forward.
- I was informed about removal of a business that had operated at NW 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 62 Street in Liberty City for nearly 50 years, the Greene Dreams Shoe Care Center, Inc. The Miami-Dade Transit Agency had been seeking the removal of the business for over a year in order to tear down the existing structures and construct a transit village complex. Mr. Greene has successfully obtained a court injunction allowing him to stay. The building had been found to be unsafe by City of Miami inspectors and was demolished. Community activists and Rev. Al Sharpton had gotten involved over concerns about the removal of black-owned businesses. We understand that Mr. Greene has been provided relocation assistance and has moved to a location nearby. The CRB will continue to monitor the situation and encourage cooperation among the parties.
- There has been some misunderstanding about the Miami-Dade Transit agency's participation in the Dr. MLK Jr. Parade and Festival and the CRB was asked to get involved. We met with Deputy Mayor Alina Hudak, Transit Director Ysela Llort and other representatives of the Mayor's Office and with representatives of the Transit Workers Union. The parties were able to work out a resolution and the Transit Workers and MDTA were able to participate in the parade. Thank you to everyone who was involved including CRB member Lovette McGill and Priscilla Dames-Blake.
- I have represented the CRB on the law enforcement group that is preparing for the trial of George Zimmerman in the death of Trayvon Martin. There is

supposed to be a hearing in April on a "Stand Your Ground" motion and Zimmerman may be exonerated. The situation is explosive. Whatever the outcome, someone will be disappointed. I have been asked by the Department of Justice to work on your behalf and make a trip to Sanford, Florida to meet with community members and clergy there. Also, if a trial takes place, they have arranged for the CRB to have seats in the courtroom so that we have communication. I am wearing several hats and doing all we can to dissuade any negative elements.

- Edward Shohat reported that the CRB has been working with the Miami-Dade Youth Commission and convened an advisory group of over 25 young people from seven community organizations. We are partnering with the young people to convene a youth summit to get out the message of non-violence. The "Stand Youth Ground" motion could have a major impact in this community. We are doing our homework to keep our finger on the pulse of the young people and to let them know that violence is not the way.

A quorum was affirmed.

## **2. Special Report: Financial Disclosure for Advisory Board Members**

### ***-Miami-Dade Elections Department***

**Discussion:** Caroline Lopez and Carmen Bofill reported that all BCC advisory board members are required to complete a financial disclosure form for every year that they serve. Forms were distributed and it was explained how to complete the short form which asks for the source of the board member's revenue, not the amounts. The purpose of the disclosure is to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest. The form is one page and should be completed in January of each year. Persons who do not file are subject to penalties. All members who are active in a calendar year must comply.

## **3. CRB Committees**

### **• Fair Immigration**

**Discussion:** Dr. Richardson reported that the Fair Immigration Committee has not met for some time. Immigration reform legislation had not been proposed in Washington and we will respond when there is some indication of how the government will proceed. Mr. Valdes stated that the CRB has an obligation to reflect the sentiments of the community. The CRB has been proactive in the past. Ms. McGill stated that the Labor Movement has been tasked nationally with pursuing immigration reform. Lots of people, not only Hispanics, are concerned. A Town hall meeting will be held in Miami Gardens and I want to engage CRB members to be part of that event. Dr. Capp stated that the CRB has historically been involved in immigration issues. There was a previous window of opportunity that did not pan out last summer. We need to support community efforts and mobilize with these groups. Mr. Martinez stated that there has not been any progress resulting from the commitments of the President and

Congressional leaders as of yet. There is much confusion in the community. Mr. Kabani stated that the issue is burning now. We have diversity in the community and need to act to respond to the urgent needs of the community. Dr. Richardson directed CRB staff to consult with the CRB Fair Immigration Chairs and schedule a meeting. Mr. Tavakoly thanked Reinaldo Valdes for working to re-establish the CRB Fair Immigration Committee.

- **Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement: CRB Trayvon Martin Action Plan**

**Discussion:** Vickie Smith Jackson reported that an update on the activities that have been conducted to implement the plan are included in the meeting package. Ms. Jackson said that she met with the chair of the Youth Commission to review the CRB Action Plan and the Commission Chair stated that the youth are committed to working with us to implement the action plan and to conduct the summit. The date of the summit is preliminarily approved for March 28, 2013. The purpose of the summit is to learn from the youth about what and how to communicate with the community. Dr. Richardson reported that he will participate alongside the Youth Commission Chair at the Summit and that the event will be televised. He encouraged all CRB members to attend. Ms. Jackson asked CRB members to distribute invitations, when available, to youth and community organizations and encourage them to attend. Ms. Dames said that she had attended a meeting of the Mayor's Task Force on Youth Violence and that members of the Youth Commission spoke eloquently about the Youth Summit.

- **CRB 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration**

**Discussion:** Dr. Capp reported that a sample package that is being used for fundraising and sponsorships is being disseminated. The sample letter can be personalized and CRB members listed as the contact person. At the CRB last month we agreed to set a goal that each member would seek to raise \$1,000 toward the effort. A budget is enclosed in the package. Thank you to Mr. Tavakoly for designing the letterhead. Mr. Valdes thanked Dr. Capp for his efforts. A fundraising event will be held at U.S. Century Bank. Ms. Dames volunteered to help make phone calls.

- 4. **Issues Roundtable: Critical and Pressing Community Relations Concerns**

- **Catalyst Miami:** Carolyn Nelson Goedert shared information about programs the organization is offering now and provided a pamphlet.

- **Need for Community Oversight of Law Enforcement in the Death of DeCarlos Moore and Other Police Involved Shootings**

**Discussion:** Dr. Richardson reported that the killing of seven black men by Miami police two years ago has caused a stir in Miami-Dade. The State Attorney did not find criminal wrongdoing in the death of one of those men, DeCarlos Moore, who was unarmed when he was killed. We want to make sure that we are sensitized and aware of those issues. To address us is the CEO and President of Brothers of the Same Mind, Brian Dennis.

Mr. Dennis stated that all CRB members are volunteers, but you must give staff the tools to work with and to be present to know what's going on in the community. They have to be unbiased. If a situation is wrong, then this is a liability to the community. Mr. Dennis urged the CRB members to listen to the tape of the meeting of the City of Miami Civilian Investigative Panel (CIP) that occurred last evening. The CIP members were not aware of the community issues. A police officer can cite fear for his life and shoot a citizen and be acquitted. The officer shot DeCarlos Moore, a citizen in the head. No one asked questions regarding the officer. Shooting policies have been used to find that officers violated policies and they were fired. Had eight black men shot seven people you would not have had the same reaction. One officer killed two people while he was under investigation. Things like this take place in Liberty City. The CRB must be visible in the community. Dr. Richardson stated that the CRB is aware of all police involved shootings in Miami-Dade County. Mr. Dennis said that the CRB must get the votes it needs to allow staff to do what is needed.

Mr. Shohat said that the CRB has tried to be proactive and convened meetings last year on the subject matter of unarmed men being shot. We heard from the victim's families and community responses from organizations like the state attorney. One major issue is the lack and difficulty of communication as to what's happening. We have done the best we can. We are anxious to have input on what is going on out there.

Mr. Dennis stated that there is a lot of shootings, there is a small band of people doing it. We have stepped in and tried to stop it from happening. The crime rate is high among these FCAT children who drop out without an education.

Christopher Benjamin, Second Vice President, Miami-Dade Branch NAACP, read a statement issued by the NAACP about the CIP process. Mr. Benjamin stated that the CIP investigations are not complete enough to catch things that fall through the cracks. The CIP saw the way that the issue was reported to the public was not good. They have a capable investigator but they did not utilize the normal investigators to supplement his work. He was not presenting to the public but to the board. The people present at the meeting were concerned about the way he was responding. The crowd was completely lost. The issue the public saw is how could a person be shot that had no weapon and no one was in trouble. They put their legal spin on it and did not respond in a constructive, clear way. We did not hear how the City of Miami use of force policy played into the analysis. There is not enough community outreach to educate the public. We need to be proactive and to educate the community and dispel misnomers about what the rules are. You may see a change in some people.

Dr. Richardson said that the CRB Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement Committee is convening a youth committee that will be educated and

empowered. We are doing that and we can do more. Mr. Dennis can keep us educated. That is key.

Dr. Capp said that there is an opportunity for all of us to be educated and be proactive. We need to have the new Police Director to come before this board. I applaud the Police Director for taking action on officers not doing their job.

Dr. Richardson stated that if the outcry comes from people like you (Mr. Dennis) it makes a profound statement.

Mr. Benjamin said that there needs to be policies and procedures in place and standards to be followed and determinations on whether police officers are following policies.

Renita Holmes stated that people also have issues of abuse. We have to look at our own perceptions.

The meeting was adjourned.

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	<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>LATE</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
1	<i>Mario Artecona,</i>			✓
2	<i>Dr. Larry Capp</i>	✓		
3	<i>Lyse Cuellar-Vidal</i>			✓
4	<i>Priscilla Dames-Blake</i>	✓		
5	<i>Valerie Lynn Davis-Bailey</i>	✓		
6	<i>Michell Dunaj Lucking</i>	✓		
7	<i>Ronald Fulton</i>	✓		
8	<i>Rev. Eddie Gervais</i>			✓
9	<i>Martha Gonzolez-Rovirosa</i>	✓		
10	<i>Ahmed Kabani</i>	✓		
11	<i>Dr. Faisal Kaleem</i>			✓
12	<i>Harlene Kennedy</i>	✓		
13	<i>Maritza Lopez</i>			✓
14	<i>Herman Martinez</i>	✓		
15	<i>Lovette McGill</i>	✓		
16	<i>Dr. Helen Lawrence McGuire</i>			
17	<i>Dr. Walter Richardson</i>	✓		
18	<i>Wilfredo Ruiz</i>	✓		
19	<i>Brian Siegal</i>			✓
20	<i>Rabbi Solomon Schiff</i>	✓		
21	<i>Edward Shohat</i>	✓		
22	<i>Vickie M. Smith Jackson</i>	✓		
23	<i>Farzana M. Tapia</i>	✓		

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24	<i>Adam Tavakoly</i>	✓		
25	<i>Reinaldo Valdes</i>	✓		
26	<i>Dr. Harold A. Vieux</i>			✓
27	<i>L. George Yap</i>	✓		
28	<i>Marjorie York</i>	✓		